

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

KOREAN WAR HEROISM

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, with the approach of Memorial Day, it is my privilege to call the attention of this body to one of the greatest, yet least known, acts of sustained heroism in the history of the United States. It occurred 50 years ago in the sixth month of the Korean war.

In December of 1950 American forces accomplished the unbelievable evacuation of 100,000 Allied troops from the port city of Hungnam in North Korea, barely hours ahead of the charging forces of our two newest enemies, North Korea and Communist China. At the same time our American soldiers, sailors, and marines, managed to evacuate another 100,000 persons, all North Korean civilian refugees who were fleeing their own harsh dictatorship and the ruthless Chinese army whose leaders had threatened to cut off their heads because some had been aiding our United Nations forces.

One of the most heroic acts in the evacuation of Hungnam is the virtually unknown story of a small American merchant marine freighter, the S.S. *Meredith Victory*. With space for only twelve passengers, the ship loaded and rescued 14,000 North Koreans—the innocent people of our enemy—old men, young mothers with their babies on their backs and at their breasts, children carrying children. Their rescue was accomplished during one danger-filled voyage of three days and three nights in bitter winter cold that ended in safety and freedom on Christmas Day. The United States Government, through its Maritime Administration, has called it “the greatest rescue operation by a single ship in the history of mankind.”

The Korean war has been called “America’s forgotten war,” and the evacuation of Hungnam has been called “the forgotten battle in the forgotten war.” I submit, that the heroic story of the men of the S.S. *Meredith Victory* is “the forgotten rescue.”

Fortunately, this story is now being brought to the attention of the American people in a new book “Ship of Miracles” by Bill Gilbert, a former reporter for the Washington Post who served in the U.S. Air Force during and after the Korean war. The foreword to his book is written by General Alexander M. Haig Jr. whose career included serving as White House chief of staff, NATO commander, and Secretary of State. Appropriately, however, General Haig served in Korea during the war and was directly involved in the rescue of our troops and the refugees from Hungnam. The book was released by Triumph Books of Chicago.

General Haig states in his foreword, “The story of Hungnam and the *Meredith Victory* is a brilliant yet relatively unknown chapter in American history that can now take its place, during this

fiftieth anniversary of the Korean war, among such legendary names as Bunker Hill, Midway, the Battle of the Bulge, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. This book did not just deserve to be written—it needed to be written.”

The men of the *Meredith Victory*, led by their captain, Leonard LaRue of Philadelphia, emerge as the heroes of this amazing story. Every one of the 14,000 refugees aboard that ship survived, plus five babies born enroute to safety with no doctors to help. There was no food for the refugees, no water, no sanitation facilities, no interpreters, and no protection against the enemy. The men of the *Meredith Victory* accomplished their rescue while sailing through one of the heaviest-laid mine fields in the history of naval warfare with no mine detectors. They had no anti-aircraft guns in case of an air attack. Radio contact with other ships was forbidden for security reasons. To add to the prolonged tension, the ship was carrying a large supply of jet fuel.

The *Meredith Victory* arrived at Pusan on the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula on Christmas eve but was not allowed to land because the port was already overflowing with refugees and rescued American troops. Captain LaRue wrote later of “these people aboard who, like the Holy Family many centuries before, were themselves refugees from a tyrannical force.” The ship did land safely on Christmas Day on Koje-Do island, fifty miles southwest of Pusan.

One of the Navy officers who participated in the Hungnam evacuation was the late Admiral Arleigh Burke who became Chief of Naval Operations. He later said, “As a result of the extraordinary efforts of the men of the *Meredith Victory*, many people are now free who otherwise might well be under the Communist yoke. Many unknown Koreans owe the future freedom of their children to the efforts of these men.”

Larry King, the talk show host, said “‘Ship of Miracles’ will make you proud to be an American.”

The book has already won its first award. Mr. Gilbert has been awarded the Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt Naval History Prize, awarded annually by the New York Council of the Navy League. The Council’s president, Rear Admiral Robert A. Ravitz (USNR, ret.), said Mr. Gilbert was selected “because his book tells a story of American heroism and humanitarianism which has gone overlooked for 50 years and should be told and made a shining part of our military history.”

Admiral Ravitz added, “At a time when we are reading other stories about what American forces did or didn’t do in Korea and elsewhere, Mr. Gilbert has made a valuable contribution to American history of revealing this story of both the bravery and the goodness of America’s men in time of war.”

For these reasons, our nation owes a debt to Bill Gilbert on this Memorial

Day for writing a book which reminds the American people of that forgotten war and of an heroic incident in that war by the brave men of the S.S. *Meredith Victory*.

IN RECOGNITION OF OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of “Older Americans Month.” Since 1963 when President Kennedy began this important tradition, each May has been designated as a time for our country to honor our older citizens for their many accomplishments and contributions to our Nation. Those of us who have worked diligently in the U.S. Senate to ensure that older Americans are able to live in dignity and independence during their later years look forward to this opportunity to pause and reflect on the contributions of those individuals who have played such a major role in the shaping of our great Nation. We honor them for their hard work and the countless sacrifices they have made throughout their lifetimes, and look forward to their continued contributions to our country’s welfare.

Today’s older citizens have witnessed more technological advances than any other generation in our Nation’s history. Seniors today have lived through times of extreme economic depression and prosperity, times of war and peace, and incredible advancements in the fields of science, medicine, transportation and communications. They have adapted to these changes remarkably well while continuing to make meaningful contributions to this country.

Recent Census figures reveal that the number of Americans 85 and older grew 37 percent during the 1990’s while the nation’s overall population increased only 13 percent. Baby boomers, who represented one-third of all Americans in 1994, will enter the 65-years-and-older category over the next 13-34 years, substantially increasing this segment of our population.

At the same time the number of older Americans is skyrocketing, they are in much better health and far less likely than their counterparts of previous generations to be impoverished, disabled or living in nursing homes. More older Americans are working and volunteer far beyond the traditional retirement age to give younger generations the benefit of their wisdom. These figures show that commitment to programs such as Medicare and Social Security, and investment in biomedical research and treatment are improving the quality of life for older Americans. One of our national goals must be to ensure all older Americans experience these improvements. We must continue to enact meaningful legislation to help meet the needs of this valuable and constantly expanding segment of our society.

By 2020, Medicare will be responsible for covering nearly 20 percent of the population. Yet 3 in 5 Medicare beneficiaries lack affordable, prescription

drug coverage. Though Medicare works, it was created in a different time before the benefits of prescription medicines had become such an integral part of health care. Today it is unthinkable to think of quality healthcare coverage without including the medicines that treat and prevent illnesses. I have and will continue to fight for Medicare prescription drug coverage. As a cosponsor of the Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Act of 2001, I recognize the predicament many older Americans are in as they struggle to live independently on a fixed income and afford costly prescription drugs. It is imperative that we address the needs of the Americans who have devoted so much of their life experience and achievement to better our society.

The celebration of Older Americans Month provides us with the opportunity to highlight the importance of the Older Americans Act. As a vigorous and consistent supporter of measures to benefit older Americans, I am pleased that Congress and President Clinton reauthorized this important legislation last year. I commend my colleague from Maryland, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, for her tireless efforts in pressing for enactment of The Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000. This legislation funds a dynamic network of community and home-based services so critical to many of our Nation's seniors, including home care, ombudsman services for residents in long-term care facilities, and subsidized employment for older workers.

One of the most beneficial provisions of the Act is the creation of the National Family Caregiver Support Program. The Administration on Aging estimates that each day, as many as 5 million older Americans are recipients of care from more than 22 million informal caregivers. On average, these caregivers will limit their professional opportunities and lose an average of \$550,000 in total wage wealth as they care for their loved ones. Women are 50 percent more likely to be informal caregivers, and as a result, they are more likely to risk their health, earnings and retirement security. As programs such as Medicare and Medicaid continue to feel the pressures of the current Federal budget process, the noble and compassionate work of these dedicated individuals is particularly critical. The National Family Caregiver Support Program addresses the challenges faced by informal caregivers. It authorizes funding for distribution of information to caregivers regarding available services, caregiver training, and respite services to provide families temporary relief from caregiving responsibilities.

I have always believed strongly that this wise population contributes greatly to American society. Our Nation's older generations are an ever-growing resource that deserves our attention, our gratitude, and our heart-felt respect. As observance of Older American Month comes to a close, I look forward

to working with my colleagues in the Senate to implement public policies that affirm the contributions of older Americans to our society and ensure that they continue to thrive with dignity.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY last month. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a heinous crime that occurred November 7, 1999 in Lawrence, KS. Two heterosexual men, one a student at Kansas University, were walking down the street when some men directed anti-gay epithets at them. After responding to the remarks, the two were attacked by five men. One of the victims was knocked backwards on a concrete planter and held down while two attackers struck his face with their fists. The other ran to call the police. This was the third such incident in as many months. One of the victims said that the police initially told him they could not arrest the perpetrators because, "it was their word against ours."

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation, we can change hearts and minds as well.

ROLE OF THE FEDERAL OMBUDSMEN IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, last week the General Accounting Office, GAO, released a report I requested entitled "Human Capital: The Role of Ombudsmen in Dispute Resolution." The report studies the use of Federal ombudsman offices as an informal alternative to existing and more conventional processes to deal with personnel conflicts inside Federal agencies.

I know that traditional formal dispute resolution processes have long been criticized. To address these concerns, the Federal Government promotes and encourages alternative methods including the use of ombudsmen. This has resulted in the greater use of alternative dispute resolution, ADR, practices, both because of legislation, specifically the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1990, ADRA, and because of a desire to resolve workplaces conflicts quickly to the mutual benefit of both the employee and the agency. I wish to point out that ombudsmen are not themselves an alternative means of dispute resolution, but rather a neutral practitioner of dispute resolution practices, including ADR techniques, to handle complaints.

I support strong workplace protections to protect Federal employees from arbitrary agency actions and prohibited personnel practices. Ombudsmen provide another way to ensure a more rapid conclusion to workplace problems. These offices may also provide another tool in assisting agencies in attracting, retaining, and motivating their workforces. In fact, this report concludes that "ombudsman offices can offer a useful option for agencies to consider in developing their overall human capital management policies and practices." Another plus is that these offices focus on identifying systemic issues and developing conflict prevention strategies.

The GAO identified 22 workplace ombudsman offices in 10 agencies. Their "best practices" report focuses for illustrative purposes on offices within three agencies: The National Institutes of Health, NIH, the International Broadcasting Bureau, IBB, and the U.S. Secret Service.

NIH has one of the most developed ombudsman offices, which was established in 1997, and now has four full time ombudsmen. The IBB office began as a part-time position in 1988, and now has two full-time officials. The Secret Service's office, started in 1987, employs one full-time staff member and nine collateral-duty people serving the Secret Service's field offices.

These ombudsmen are high-level managers with broad authority to deal with almost any workplace issue, including answering questions about agency policies, cutting through "red tape," counseling employees and coaching them on how to manage situations, handling accusations about employment discrimination, and workplace safety issues. Ombudsmen are a resource for Federal workers with workplace issues; an office which they can consult that is independent, neutral, and provides confidentiality.

The 1990 ADRA authorizes the use of ombudsman offices but does not define or set standards for an ombudsman. The Act, as amended in 1996, established the Interagency ADR Working Group. There is also a Coalition of Federal Ombudsmen. The NIH, IBB, and Secret Service ombudsmen who participated in the GAO report are involved with both these and outside organizations. Some of the non-Federal Government organizations have published or drafted standards of practice for ombudsmen. These standards focus on the core principals of independence, neutrality, and confidentiality, which requires a commitment from the highest levels within an agency. This commitment is the guiding force in the success of the three offices studied by the GAO.

In addition to support from senior management, an ombudsman office must work closely with unions representing Federal workers. The General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority has issued guidance concerning the establishment of ADR